TIPS FOR TEACHING TECHNIQUE

What is technique?
Introduce the following points. Demonstrate proper technique using yourself or a student.

1. Place your feet for balance.
2. Center your body to the "H" key.
3. Sit with correct posture.
4. Keep your fingers curved.
5. Never rest your palms on the base of the keyboard.
6. Tap the space bar with the right thumb only. This evens out the work of the hands.
7. Do not look at your fingers or the keyboard while keying. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT! This will train students in the touch system of keying.
8. Hit the RETURN/ENTER key with your right pinkie.

Emphasize Technique
Let students know they will be graded (evaluated) on technique so that they begin to value technique. Helping students set goals for technique and letter mastery will be helpful.

Sense of Touch
Students who lose their place often may be looking at their fingers. Looking away from the copy (book) makes the student less efficient. Ask students who are watching hands what sense they are not using (sense of touch). Ask students to practice finding the homerow by feeling for the bump (or ridge) without looking.

Introduce Home Row
Identify the "name" of each finger: Left pinkie "A", left ring "S", left tall "D", left pointer "F". Right pinkie ";", right ring "L", right tall "K", right pointer "J". Space with the right thumb only. These keys are keyed with the tip of the finger.

Introduction of New Keys

1. Demonstrate these reaches to the students. This can be done on an overhead or at a keyboard.
2. Reaches on the top row should be keyed with the ball part of the finger. Reaches on the bottom row should be keyed with the nail part of the finger with the exception of "B" and "N". "G, H, B, N" are keyed with the ball part of the finger.
3. Point out patterns on the keyboard as they apply.

Peer Tutors
It is difficult to always know what all ten fingers of each student in an entire class are doing. Peer tutoring can be used to allow students to take ownership of evaluation and to check for understanding of instruction.

Evaluating Errors
The cause of an error is more important than the fact that the student made a mistake. Many errors are the symptoms of faulty keyboarding technique, wrong finger curve, eyes not on copy, or posture. DO NOT LET STUDENTS USE THE BACKSPACE (DELETE) KEY TO CORRECT ERRORS.

Motivation
Help students see their progress immediately. Measure progress in terms of perfecting technique, rather than by increasing speed. Reinforce students when they are using correct technique.

Closure
Reflective thinking aids the learning process. For example, discuss the new letter learned. End the day with "eyes closed" dictation or before leaving the computer lab, sing a song.